

## Laying of the Wreaths

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Last December, I took my seven-year-old grandson, Jake, with me when I went to Bay Pines National Cemetery to lay wreaths on the graves of our fallen military.<sup>1</sup>

After putting out a few of them, the boy paused and read the name on the headstone.

"William S." he said softly. "December 7th, 1941." He then looked at me for an explanation.

"That day, December 7th, was the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed back during World War Two. The Seaman was probably killed in the attack."

The little boy went from grave to grave, placing his wreath and reading the names.

"Norman G. January 10th, 1945."

I replied as he looked at the man's name, "That would be the Battle of the Bulge."

"Andrew M." he read. "June 6th, 1944."

"June 6th is the day that thousands of men stormed the beach at Normandy."

"Jackson H., February 14th, 1945."

I had to look that one up, but replied shortly, "That was the day of the bombing of Dresden. Not all of our airmen returned."

He placed a wreath on the grave and moved to the next one. "This one says Charles K., but then just says Inchon." Jake took a step back after placing the wreath, and saluted.

I smiled through a small tear in my eye as I watched a new patriot being born, even as we honored the thousands of others who had gone before.

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The laying of these wreaths, the honoring of these men and women, would not be possible without the support of those of us who have reaped the rewards of their service.

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<sup>1</sup> Wreaths Across America Project